

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS BRINGS THE ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL TO ATHENS
FOR ITS ANNUAL MEETING

1. ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS ARRIVED IN ATHENS ON JULY 1 WITH
MEMBERS OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL OF NORTH
AND SOUTH AMERICA WHICH WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL MEETING HERE
JULY 2-7. DESPITE ATTACKS AGAINST IAKOVOS WHICH HAVE APPEARED
IN THE GREEK PRESS (SEE BELOW), THE GREEK GOVERNMENT IS
PAYING SPECIAL HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION TO THE VISIT OF THE
ARCHBISHOP AND THE MEETING OF HIS ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL.
IAKOVOS WAS WELCOMED ON HIS ARRIVAL BY DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER STAVROPOULOS AND UNDER SECRETARY OF EDUCATION AND
RELIGION KARAPIPERIS AS WELL AS BY OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS OF
THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH.

2. THE OPENING SESSION OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL ON
JULY 2 AT THE HILTON HOTEL WAS ATTENDED BY ARCHBISHOP
SERAPHIM OF ATHENS AND LL OF GREECE, MRS. TSATSOS (WIFE
OF THE PRESIDENT OF GREECE), THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION
AND RELIGION, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER STAVROPOULOS, AND
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF EDUCATION AND RELIGION. AMBASSADOR
KUBISCH ALSO ATTENDED THE OPENING SESSION AND WELCOMED THE GROUP.
LATER IN THE SESSION, MINISTER TO THE PRIME

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MINISTER RALLIS ALSO ATTENDED THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE

COUNCIL. MR. RALLIS IS GIVING AN OFFICIAL RECEPTION ON BEHALF OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT IN HONOR OF THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL THIS EVENING. THE AMBASSADOR IS HAVING A RECEPTION FOR THEM TOMORROW EVENING.

3. IN HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AT THE OPENING OF THE COUNCIL SESSION ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS STRESSED THAT ONE IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE IN HOLDING THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL IN ATHENS WAS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF GREEK-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IN REPLY TO A PRESS QUERY ON HIS ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT CONCERNING CYPRUS, IAKOVOS SAID THAT AS A CLERGYMAN HE SHOULD BE OPTIMISTIC AND THAT HE BELIEVES IN THE EVENTUAL VICTORY OF MORAL VALUES. "I THEREFORE HOPE THAT RIGHT WILL PREVAIL AND THAT A SOLUTION WILL BE FOUND TO THE CYPRUS PROBLEM WHICH WILL BE IMPOSED BY THE CONSCIENCE OF THE PEOPLE".

4. SEVERAL STORIES HAVE APPEARED IN THE GREEK PRESS RECENTLY ATTACKING THE ARCHBISHOP FOR ALLEGED COOPERATION WITH THE MILITARY JUNTA. IN FACT TWO GREEK-AMERICANS FROM CHICAGO HAVE FILED A SUIT IN AN ATHENS COURT CHARGING THAT IAKOVOS HAD "COMMITTED CRIMES AGAINST THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY OF GREECE BECAUSE HE COLLABORATED WITH THE LEADERS OF THE MILITARY COUP." IN REPLY TO THESE ALLEGATIONS A GREEK GOVERNMENT SOURCE ISSUED A STATEMNT ON JULY 1 CHARACTERIZING THEM AS SUSPECT AND REPREHENSIBLE. THE GOG SOURCE CONTINUED THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT HONORS THE ARCHBISHOP, DISAPPROVES OF ATTEMPTS TO BELITTLE HIS PRESTIGE AND CONSIDERS HIS ACTIVITIES AS VALUABLE FROM EVERY VIEWPOINT. THE OFFICIAL CONCLUDED THAT THE ARCHBISHOP'S STAND DURING THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP "WAS NOT ONLY IRREPROACHABLE BUT HE ALSO DEMONSTRABLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFORT FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY. CONSEQUENTLY, THE UNFOUNDED AND IRRESPONSIBLE ACCUSATIONS VOICED AGAINST HIM ARE EITHER DUE TO PERSONAL MALACE OR AIM AT UNDERMINING THE COHESION OF HELLENISM."

KUBISCH

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